

indicate the presence of a larva of *Blastodacna atra* Haw. in the shoot. The larva kills the leading bud and usually a few surrounding leaves die. Carefully pull away the dead central bud to check if a larva or pupa is present. The feeding place is conspicuous by mid-May but probably it is easier to note the spot and collect in early June. It is a local species. My specimens have come from small and/or unhealthy trees. (J. ROCHE).

Larvae of the plume moth *Platyptilia pallidactyla* Haw. can be found feeding on *Achillea* in early May. The fairly large larva tunnels into the growing tip of the larger shoots stunting them and often causing the ends to show swelling and signs of frass (WATKINSON).

The Burren form of *Anania funebris* (Ström) has larger white markings than the English form. On the morning of May 31st 1978, we found it flying low amongst herbage and difficult to catch, but in the early evening it flew high and fast and was more easily netted (GOATER).

Cocoons of the extremely pretty tortricid *Pammene regiana* Zell. may usually be readily found on Sycamore trunks in mid-May. The larvae spin their cocoons between the trunk and the large flakes of loose bark so often found at the base of these trees, and they hibernate until late spring. If the cocoons are collected earlier in the year, the larvae often die before pupation (WATKINSON).

## Notes and Observations

*CALLIMORPHA DOMINULA* (L.): SCARLET TIGER IN SOUTH CUMBRIA. — Early in May this year (1979) I received a telephone call from a lady (Mrs. X) living a few miles from Kendal reporting that she had a large number of caterpillars feeding in her garden, and in neighbouring gardens, on borage. The larvae were destroying all the plants and then going on to feed on other low growing plants. She then informed me that she believed these larvae to be those of the Scarlet Tiger moth. I was frankly sceptical of this diagnosis. In addition to the present larval invasion she reported that in 1978 she had seen imagines of the moth flying in the vicinity.

I visited her garden and the immediate environs and there, sure enough, were many larvae of *C. dominula* in their penultimate instar. All the borage was eaten to the stalks and many larvae were on other low growing plants, including nettle. I collected ten larvae and, not having any borage available in my garden, fed them on nettle. During the first ten days of July I bred out nine specimens of *C. dominula* of typical facies.

The next question coming to mind was whence did they come? Near Mrs. X's garden was a market garden establishment — which also had its share of larvae. This particular firm deals mainly in vegetables, not flowers, and no record of importing any plants on which the *dominula* might have come.

So the mystery remains. As is well known the normal distribution of *C. dominula* is southern so one supposes that the present flourishing colony must in some way have been artificially introduced.

With her concurrence I have not named the original finder of the colony in view of the fact that there are very few of the same name in the telephone directory and she could be readily located. We agree that the exact location of the colony should not at present be published. I am most grateful to Mrs. X for drawing my attention to this colony and allowing me to take some larvae for final confirmation of the record. Specimens of the moth have been deposited in Kendal Museum. — DR. NEVILLE L. BIRKETT, Kendal Wood, New Hutton, near Kendal, Cumbria.

HAZARDS OF BUTTERFLY COLLECTING — NIGERIA. — In the tropical forest zone of West Africa you often come across columns of driver ants traversing the road or track on which you walk. They are a fascinating spectacle; weaved at a distance the column — about the width of a hand — looks like a never ending flow of treacle. The flanks are guarded by a line of ferocious soldiers with manibles so large that they ought to be able to snap a match in two. Disappointingly they cannot; I tried. When the flank is disturbed, the soldiers bunch at the threatened spot and are joined by colleagues who are hurrying through the mass of workers in order to up resume duty at the tête of the column. Soon a formidable defensive bulge is formed.

From time to time the entire column halts and the ants fan out in all directions to forage, covering an area of half a square kilometre. They feed avidly on anything, including passing entomologists. Ants are everywhere and the entomologist who manages to blunder into their foraging area will find that he may be in the right place but at the decidedly wrong time. By the time he makes this discovery he will already be covered by hundreds of ants. There is only one course of action; run for cover, or rather for open ground. Any attempt to get rid of the ants on the spot will only make matters worse. A quick sprint of about four hundred metres is by painful experience about right. Then strip, making no obeisance to false modesty. Finally, pick off individually each ant, taking care to include the head since otherwise the jaws will lock like a clamp. There are persistent rumours that the heads of driver ants have been used to suture operation scars, but I have not been able to verify them.

The best places in which to strip in a tropical forest tend to be public roads, so the question of modesty — false or otherwise — is a very real one. Gaggles of Yoruba matrons on their way to market have witnessed several of my stripping exercises. Generally speaking they are quite good about it. There are no other circumstances under which I have been able to get a free treat of delicious fruit off market mammals in that part of the world. But whenever I see a column of driver